

Music Review: The Dutch Woodstock (Gonzo Multimedia, CD/DVD)

by [Howard Whitman](#) on June 25, 2013 at 11:21 am

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The Dutch Woodstock CD/DVD set

Woodstock wasn't the only potentially world-changing concert held at the end of the 1960s—it certainly triggered a wave of subsequent mega-concerts, such as the Holland Pop Festival held in June of 1970. Filmed and recorded but still relatively unknown, this show is now getting a nice release in a three-disc (two CDs, one DVD) package under a title that's certain to draw some attention—*The Dutch Woodstock*, an association that seems pretty apt based on this set.

This three-day festival certainly was modeled after the upstate New York one, and shared some acts with it, including Jefferson Airplane, Canned Heat and Santana. But this show also had many distinctly European acts, and it's the chance to see such groups—many of which are no longer around—that gives *The Dutch Woodstock* its special buzz.

Sure, we know Pink Floyd, but at the time of this show, the quintessential space-rock band was floundering, lacking direction after the acid-fueled crackup of frontman Syd Barrett. Floyd had not found its direction with *Dark Side of the Moon* (that came in 1973), and here the band is shown playing jammy versions of its epics "Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun" and "A Saucerful of Secrets."

Lesser-known in the U.S., the band Family is worth checking out here, for its oddball performance of "Drowned in Wine," which features a truly bizarre vocal from Roger Chapman. The weird fusion-meets-art-rock instrumental band Soft Machine cranks out "Esther's Nose Job." Pre-"Bang a Gong" T-Rex delivers an electric guitar/bongos duet of "By the Light of the Magical Moon."

The bands on this bill span the gamut, from the druggy jams of the Airplane to the New Orleans voodoo-sparked gumbo music of Dr. John. That's how it was in those days—anything would fly. Concert bills were varied in those days, and it's certainly refreshing in today's world of packaged tours comprised of bands playing in a similar style. Remember: Sha Na Na played at Woodstock. In those days, eclectic was the norm.

Typical of concert films from this era, the camera goes in close—often focusing on faces of the singers and players. That can be a bit disconcerting for a musical gearhead like me, and I'd like to see what kinds of guitars they're playing and

what their hands are doing. But that was how these shows were shot in this time—check out the *Monterey Pop* and *Woodstock* movies for other examples.

Public nudity was also a staple at these shows, and the director here seemingly sought to catch every instance at this show on film. There’s also drug taking, and shots of the members of the 100,000-person audience freaking out. There’s one dude holding a pair of food cans up to people’s heads for reasons unknown. This kind of thing went with the territory.

The audio isn’t bad, especially considering when this was made. The performances are as-is, so every piece of flat singing (Grace Slick is a prime offender in some spots) and out-of-tune guitars (ditto Santana) is left intact. That’s cool. This set does a great job fulfilling its mission: to be a time capsule, a prime artifact of an era long gone by and acts we’ll not see the caliber of again. Well worth checking out both as a cultural artifact, and as a once-in-a-lifetime concert experience.

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